

By The Associated Press  
Thursday, February 23, 2011

**ATLANTA (AP)** - Congressman Sanford Bishop and Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black say the federal government must maintain a financial safety net for farmers as Congress weighs spending cuts.

While they cautioned against hasty spending cuts, they did not say where the federal government could trim its spending on agriculture.

Bishop, a Democrat, and Black, a Republican, held a news conference Wednesday after meeting to discuss upcoming legislation that could affect federal spending on agriculture, the state's single-largest economic sector.

Bishop sits on an agriculture-focused subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. The lawmaker said he wants to maintain a safety net that includes direct payments to farmers, programs that compensate growers when commodity prices drop and crop insurance.